

Whare Kaupapa Atawhai
Conservation House
18-32 Manners Street,
PO Box 10420,
Wellington 6011
doc.govt.nz

25 November 2025

Ref: OIAD-5650

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation (DOC), received on 15 September 2025, in which you asked for:

- 1. I would like all correspondence, reports, documents, meeting minutes, file notes, etc, you have on record regarding the proposal to develop 4 open cast mines, underground mine, industrial cyanide processing plant, permanent waste tailings dam, engineered land forms and miners caravan park in the Bendigo Ophir - Dunstan Mountains area by Matakanui Gold / Santana Minerals. Regardless of whether they are associated with fast track consenting or any other process.*
- 2. From August 25, 2025 until present day.*

We have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA).

On 13 October 2025, we extended the timeframe for responding to your request to 25 November 2025, due to the substantial volume of information sought and the time required to compile a response.

During the pre-application phase, Santana Minerals submitted materials to DOC for assessment. This information was provided under an obligation of confidence. Both the reports and DOC's feedback on these reports contain technical and sensitive information related to the Fast-track consenting process.

To maintain transparency while protecting the integrity of the process, DOC has either provided descriptions or summaries of these documents under section 16(1)(e) of the OIA or withheld them in full where necessary. This approach ensures official information is released while preserving Santana Minerals' ability to lodge its application without prejudice.

Santana Minerals lodged its Fast-track application on 3 November 2025. The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) is currently assessing the application for completeness. Once initial checks are complete, the application will be published, a process that typically takes one to three weeks. Until the formal application is publicly available, any reports provided by Santana



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Minerals to DOC remain commercially sensitive. Therefore, withholding or summarising this information is still required where referenced.

As advised, we have provided descriptions of some reports submitted by Santana Minerals, as they remain commercially sensitive and were provided under an obligation of confidence.

However, the full reports are withheld under section 18(d) of the OIA, as the information requested is or will soon be publicly available when the EPA publish the application.

- **Appendix A** lists the documents withheld in full, along with the relevant grounds for withholding.
- **Appendix B** contains summary information for documents too sensitive to release in full at present, pursuant to section 16(1)(e) of the OIA, as well as withholding grounds for which a summary has been provided.
- **Appendix C** includes correspondence and any remaining documentation within the requested period. Where applicable, email attachments are provided beneath the relevant email chain unless they are addressed elsewhere, withheld in full, or have been provided and declined in previous requests.

I have decided to release the relevant parts of the documents listed above, subject to information being withheld under one or more of the following sections of the OIA, as applicable:

- personal information, under section 9(2)(a) – to protect the privacy of natural persons, including deceased people,
- commercially sensitive information, under section 9(2)(b)(ii) – to protect the commercial position of the person who supplied the information, or who is the subject of the information,
- information provided in confidence, under section 9(2)(ba)(i) – to protect information where release would prejudice the ongoing supply of similar information.
- free and frank expression under section 9(2)(g)(i) – to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs,
- advice subject to legal privilege, under section 9(2)(h) - to maintain legal professional privilege,
- improper gain or advantage, under section 9(2)(k) – to prevent the disclosure or use of official information for improper gain or improper advantage.

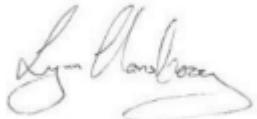
In addition, some information has been removed and marked as 'Not in scope' because it is either administrative in nature or falls outside the scope of your request.

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the OIA and determined there are no public interests that outweigh the grounds for withholding.

You are entitled to seek an investigation and review of my decision by writing to an Ombudsman as provided by section 28(3) of the OIA.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) and attached documents may be published on DOC's website.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lynn Hansberry".

Lynn Hansberry
Acting Director Regulatory Systems Performance
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Appendix A

Documents withheld in full

Document description	Withholding grounds
Draft DOC Concession and Conditions for Access Route to CIT Battery (5 Sept 2025).docx	9(2)(b)(ii), 9(2)(h), 9(2)(j)
Draft DOC Concession and Conditions for Ardgour Rise (5 Sept 2025).docx	9(2)(b)(ii), 9(2)(h), 9(2)(j)
Draft DOC Concession and Conditions for SH8 and Ardgour Road Intersection (5 Sept 2025).docx;	9(2)(b)(ii), 9(2)(h), 9(2)(j)
Draft DOC Concession and Conditions for Willow Clearance (5 Sept 2025).docx;	9(2)(b)(ii), 9(2)(h), 9(2)(j)
Critique of the Habitat NZ invertebrate report. W. Chinn..docx	9(2)(b)(ii), 9(2)(g)(i),
Part H - Working Draft Rules Assessment for RMA Approvals (29 August 2025) - for DOC.docx	9(2)(b)(ii)
Section 4 - BOGP Working Draft Substantive Application Report - Approvals Sought (29 August 2025) - for DOC.docx	9(2)(b)(ii)
Email to Environmental Solicitor, dated 29 August 2025, 2:56PM <i>FW: Bendigo-Ophir Gold Project - fast track pre-lodgement consultation</i>	9(2)(h)
Email attachment of further email correspondence from in-house solicitor, Malcolm Lucas, to DOC staff, dated 8 September 2025. 'RE: Section 78 conditions – next steps'	9(2)(h)
Feedback on the Vegetation Values Assessment: <i>BOGP_preapp_vegetation_advice_2025090.docx</i> - 4 Sept 2025	9(2)(b)(ii), 9(2)(ba)(i), 9(2)(g)(i)

Appendix C

Document schedule

Item	Date	Document description	Decision
1	24 August to 15 September 2025	Email correspondence	Released in part
2	9 June 2025	DOC Response Santana Minerals Ltd 09062025	In full
3	August 2025	Memo - Economic impacts of BOGP updated for June 2025 Pre-Feasibility Study	In full
4	1 September 2022	R239296_Map1_Topo_PCL	In full